

and your families—thank you for honoring our country, all of us with your bravery and service.

[Applause]

"It is a joy to be with the family members, as my colleagues and others have said, Jack's daughter, our ship sponsor, Donna, his sons John and Pat, grandchildren, nephews and nieces and others.

"I send the congratulations and thanks of my colleagues in Congress to Joyce—Joyce, the love of Jack's life. She and Jack were both so proud of having this ship named in his honor but Admiral Joyce was very proud to comment that the ship that she christened, the USS Bonhomme Richard, was a bigger ship. Not a competition, though.

"Service runs deep in Jack Murtha's family from his brothers, Kit and Jim, to his nephews Brian and Bob—all proud Marines—and his grandson, Lieutenant Jack Murtha in the Air Force, and to Jack's wife, Captain Amanda Murtha.

"Today, as you commission, as we all commission, the USS John P. Murtha, I want to tell you a little bit about the man your ship is named for—his legacy of strength, effectiveness and fidelity. As was mentioned by my colleague, as a child, John's grandmother told him: 'You are put on this earth to make a difference.' And that's exactly what he did. John P. Murtha dedicated his entire life to the service of our nation.

"Jack Murtha was a fiercely proud Marine, who volunteered for combat in Vietnam—earning two Purple Hearts and a Bronze Star. In the end, Congressman Murtha would leave the Corps with 37 years of service to his name. How proud he was of that.

"In the Congress, Chairman Murtha was a formidable legislator and a towering leader. To watch Jack Murtha legislate was to observe a master at work. But more indicative of his character was to watch him communicate, with our troops in theater, at the Pentagon, and in their hospital rooms.

"His experiences in the battlefield of Vietnam was what fueled his boundless dedication to our men and women in uniform—with that connection to those warriors he frequently visited in Washington, across the country and around the world.

"A few of us had the privilege of traveling in bipartisan delegations with Jack—and this one in particular to Kuwait, a few weeks before the initiation of hostilities into Iraq—we observed the level of detail with which Jack conversed with the soldiers, whether it was the comfort of the seats in their Humvees—how much they could endure as they did their jobs—responding to their needs, providing body and vehicle armor and reliable radios—you name it. Again, not just the big picture, but down to the personal comfort and safety of our troops.

"In those moments, Jack bonded with them, sharing his own personal military experiences, and caring for them really as a father—as Secretary Murtha said, he treated them as family. And they returned his respect.

"We often saw this when he would take groups of us—as Bob mentioned—take groups of us on regular visits to our wounded warriors in the hospitals. One day as we were going into one of the rooms and the nurse came and said, 'Hold up. Hold up for a while.' We wanted to be very respectful and sensitive to the privacy of the soldiers. But when we walked in to the room, we saw a young, injured soldier standing at attention by his bed and saluting Jack Murtha wearing a Pittsburgh Steelers jersey right after they had won the Super Bowl.

[Applause]

"That was football but it was very personal with Jack.

"It is important to note that Jack defined our nation's strength, not only in our mili-

tary might—as important as our military is and the priority that it is—but also our strength is measured by Jack in the health and well being of the American people.

"Chairman Murtha fought for the armed forces—whether it was for what they needed, for our troops, facilities—but he also fought to advance scientific research to seek treatments and cures for breast cancer, prostate cancer, diabetes, and HIV/AIDS—the list goes on and on. Today, at Walter Reed, the John P. Murtha Cancer Center carries forward his commitment to the health of our entire community.

"John Murtha made a difference—for our national defense, for our nation's health, for the men and women who wear our nation's uniform.

"Commander Parker, as this fine ship comes alive with her outstanding crew, the strength of the USS John P. Murtha will embody our nation's promise to stand with you and your crew—through the storm and the calm, both as you defend democracy abroad, and when you come home safely. And when our men and women in uniform come home, Jack wanted them to feel safe as well.

"In the military, he always told us: on the battlefield, we leave no soldier behind. And when they come home, we leave no veteran behind. So I join all of those saluting our veterans who are here today. That was a priority for Jack Murtha.

[Applause]

"Semper Fi' was the watchword of Jack Murtha's life. And always faithful he was: to his principles, to his promises, to his family and to the nation he loved.

"As we place the Murtha into active service, we also renew our pledge to also always be faithful to you—the sailors and Marines who will board her today, and to every crew who follows.

"Like John P. Murtha, each of you has stepped forward and answered the call to 'make a difference'—for our country, and for the world. Be proud of the legacy that has been passed down to you, be proud of your ship's namesake and motto, and be proud of the values you share.

"May God bless the USS John P. Murtha.

"May God bless the brave men and women who will serve aboard it—and the privilege of serving as the first crew for one of these great ships, who will be transported within it—and the families who wait for their safe return. You are family to all of us. You will always be in our prayers.

"May God bless you and may God bless the United States of America."

HONORING BOB STAUF

HON. ELIOT L. ENGEL

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, December 1, 2016

Mr. ENGEL. Mr. Speaker, as a former school teacher, I know just how dedicated our educators are to their students as well as the community as a whole. In the Bronx and Westchester, no one has displayed that dedication more than Bob Stauf, one of the honorees at this year's American Irish Association of Westchester Annual Dinner.

Involved in the world of education for a half century, Bob Stauf has taught elementary and junior high students at St. Philip Neri School in the Bronx, in the Yonkers Public School system and Yonkers and Tarrytown Salvation Army citadels. His work with the Salvation Army has also extended to its Advisory Board,

on which he currently serves as President for the Yonkers chapter. Bob is also the President of the 3rd Precinct Police Community Council, Vice President of the American Irish of Westchester, and facilitator of programming of Brahma Kumaris in Westchester. He has also taught adult education and home school instruction with the Yonkers School System and the Children's Village Yonkers Satellite program.

Bob has also made a difference at the local level through his work in City government. He has chaired the Yonkers Human Rights Commission under two administrations, chaired the Mayors Community Relations Committee and Mayor's Committee on Irish Affairs, chaired the Yonkers Community Action Program and was Vice Chair of New York State Community Agencies.

In addition, Bob is a good friend who was personally helpful to me just prior to my first trip as a Member of Congress to Ireland. He was a wonderful resource on Irish matters, and even traveled with me on that trip.

This year the American Irish Association of Westchester is honoring Bob Stauf at their Annual Dinner Dance. I want to congratulate Bob on this well-deserved honor and thank him for his many contributions to both the Bronx and Yonkers communities.

CELEBRATING KAZAKHSTAN'S 25 YEARS OF INDEPENDENCE

HON. DANA ROHRBACHER

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, December 1, 2016

Mr. ROHRBACHER. Mr. Speaker, on December 16th the people of Kazakhstan will celebrate 25 years of their independence. From the collapse of the Soviet Union to the present day, Kazakhstan has become a valued member in the international community and is a respected voice as a nonpermanent member of the United Nations Security Council. For the United States, the first country to recognize Kazakhstan's independence, this moment not only symbolizes Kazakhstan's remarkable development, but also marks 25 years of cooperation and friendship between our two nations.

Our strategic partnership was founded on a shared interest in nuclear nonproliferation and security. When the Soviet Union dissolved, Kazakhstan inherited the fourth largest nuclear stockpile in the world. Rather than using those resources in unproductive ways, through President Nursultan Nazarbayev's leadership this nuclear arsenal was decommissioned and Kazakhstan has continued to cooperate in these efforts.

Over the 25 years the economic relationship between Kazakhstan and the United States has greatly expanded as well. The Kazakh economy is dynamic and open to the world. From 1993 to 2013 American firms invested more than \$42 billion in Kazakhstan, and trade between our nations is measured in the billions of dollars per year.

The government and the people of Kazakhstan have made great strides in building an economically diverse, multi-ethnic and prosperous country. Kazakhstan exemplifies a country of religious diversity and shows the world how people of various faiths can live together in peace. I congratulate them on that